



Jose Anaya, UFCW Local 371
Bridgeport CT
Labor & Public Employees Committee Public Hearing
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SB 938 AN ACT CONCERNING UNEMPLOYMENT FOR STRIKING WORKERS

Good afternoon, Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, Senator Sampson, Representative Ackert, and the distinguished members of the Labor & Public Employees Committee. My name is Jose Anaya and I live in Bridgeport. In December of 2022 I began working as an organizer with UFCW Local 371. Prior to that, I was an employee at Stop and Shop since 2016. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 938.

In April of 2019, as a newly full-time employee at Stop and Shop, I walked out along with over 10,000 of my coworkers in Connecticut and thousands more in New England. I had watched my union leadership bargain for nearly four months before telling us we had no choice but to stand up and walk out. I walked out on strike despite being the only wage earner in my home and without substantial savings to protect me. I did it because I was proud of my work in my store and I knew I deserved to be treated better by my employer. I also did it because I trusted my union leadership and my coworkers. I did it because as a union member, I made a promise to stick together and if my coworkers voted to strike, I knew I was going to strike too. The strength of my coworkers and the support of my community is something I will never forget. However, the loss of eleven days of income is frankly something that took me over a year to catch up from.

If I had to do it again, I would. I know my actions and the actions of my coworkers not only protected our benefits for the workers in Stop and Shop who will come after me, but it also set the standard for non-union supermarket workers throughout the area, pressuring those non-union employers to increase their wages and benefits as well in order to attract a workforce.

Unionized workplaces raise standards for all workers. When striking workers can access unemployment benefits to help sustain themselves and their families, it empowers them to advocate for protections that benefit all workers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.